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Amendment and/or Response
Reply to Office action of 4 May 2006

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REMARKS / DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Claims 1-19 are pending in the application.

The applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for priority and receipt of certified copies of all the priority documents.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to state whether the drawings are acceptable.

The Office action objects to claims 15 and 19, and rejects claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Claims 18 and 19 are amended herein to correct a typographical error in each. The applicant respectfully requests the Examiner's reconsideration of this objection and rejection.

The Office action rejects claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Markwalter et al. (USP 6,671,284, hereinafter Markwalter) and Malek et al. (USP 5,666,366, hereinafter Malek). The applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The Examiner's attention is requested to MPEP 2142, wherein it is stated:

"To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness ... the prior art reference (or references when combined) *must teach or suggest all the claim limitations*... If the examiner does not produce a *prima facie* case, the applicant is under no obligation to submit evidence of nonobviousness."

Claim 1, upon which claims 2-6 depend, claims a network that includes bridge terminals that each include a controller that shifts the frame structure of its subnetwork to a frame structure of another subnetwork.

Claim 7, upon which claims 8-9 depend, claims a controller in a first subnetwork for controlling a first subnetwork and for displacing the frame structure of the first subnetwork relative to at least one frame structure of another subnetwork.

Claim 10, upon which claims 11-19 depend, claims a network that includes a first centralized subnetwork that includes a controller for forming associated first medium access control (MAC) frames according to a first MAC frame structure for transmission in the first subnetwork, and a second centralized subnetwork that

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includes a controller for forming associated second MAC frames according to a second MAC frame structure for transmission in the second subnetwork, wherein the central first controller shifts the first MAC frame structure to the second MAC frame structure.

The Office action acknowledges that Markwalter does not teach shifting the frame structure of its subnetwork to a frame structure of another subnetwork (Office action, section 12, first two lines).

The Office action relies upon Malek for teaching shifting the frame structure of one subnetwork to that of a second subnetwork. The applicant respectfully disagrees with this assertion.

Malek teaches controlling the timing of a slave base station to match the timing of a master base station. These stations are, by definition, in the same network. Malek does not refer to subnetworks, and specifically uses the singular form when referring to the network: "Note that synchronization is done for spectral efficiency, primarily for integrity of the RF network, but also to maintain pointer integrity in the buffer structure" (Malek, column 9, lines 5-7).

The Office action asserts that any of Malek's slave base station corresponds to a subnetwork, and that Malek's master base station corresponds to another subnetwork. The applicant respectfully maintains that a communication device cannot be said to be equivalent to a communication network. A network, by definition, includes at least two communication devices linked by a communication channel; a subnetwork is a network-within-a-network, and similarly requires at least two communication devices linked by a communication channel. A master base station alone is not a subnetwork. When the master base station establishes communication with a slave base station, a single network is formed. When communication is established with a next slave base station, that station joins the same single network; before this next slave base station joins the network, it is not a subnetwork.
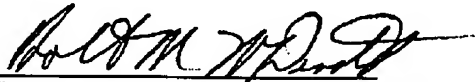
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Because both Markwalter and Malek fail to teach shifting the frame structure of a subnetwork to a frame structure of another subnetwork, as specifically claimed in each of the applicant's independent claims, the applicant respectfully maintains that the rejection of claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Markwalter and Malek is unfounded, per MPEP 2142.

In view of the foregoing, the applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of record, allow all the pending claims, and find the application to be in condition for allowance. If any points remain in issue that may best be resolved through a personal or telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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